**Abstract**

Body image is a frequent and widespread concern that impacts both male and female adolescents. Negative body image can have an adverse effect on a student’s school experience, but the impact to their academic self-efficacy is not clear. This study will examine how adolescent body image impacts student academic self-efficacy. Furthermore, this presentation will provide school psychologists essential information in order to positively impact this area of adolescent mental health.

**Literature Review**

- Adolescence is an important time for the provision of mental health services. Previous research indicates that adolescents have a more difficult time coping with and controlling their emotions when compared to adults (Blakemore & Mills, 2014), which may make them easily influenced by the media.
- Students with higher levels of body disturbance and eating disorder scores also had higher levels of academic interference and lower GPA’s (Yanover & Kevin, 2008).
- Previous research highlights the connection between adolescent girls being negatively affected by idealized body images popularized by the media.
- Adolescent girls were more likely to be disengaged from school when they reported a negative body image (Murphy, 2011).
- Yamamiya (2005) found that women who were shown thin-and-beautiful media images were more likely to be dissatisfied with their own bodies in as little as five minutes of exposure.
- Academic self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic success and other school behaviors as well as future success (Putwain, Sander, & Larkin, 2011).
- Academic self-efficacy gives us a better understanding of how students feel about their school efficacy, rather than just looking at their performance (i.e., GPA, standardized scores, etc.)
- Recent research indicates that the prevalence of disordered eating is rising among adolescent males (Allen, Byrne, Oddy, & Crosby, 2013), therefore implicating the importance of examining this population.

**Results**

- 373 male and female high school students were surveyed from a suburban high school population. 303 returned the survey for a participation rate of 81.23%.
- 50.4% of the participants were male, while 49.6% of the participants were female.

**Design**

- Students voluntarily completed Bandura’s Scale of Academic Self-Efficacy to give insight to their level of perceived self-efficacy in specific subject areas.
- Students voluntarily completed the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire to provide the researcher with their level of either positive or negative body image.
- A simple t-test was used to compare the independent variable (student body image) to the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) in specific subject areas.

**Body Image & Self-Efficacy**

![Graph showing Body Image & Self-Efficacy](image)

**Discussion**

Low Body Image had a significant impact on students’ academic self-efficacy in the specific areas of Foreign Language and English. Both English and Foreign Language require abstract thinking, while Math is more logical. Body image has a significant impact on student’s confidence toward their academics. This can be a key area to target for mental health intervention.

The school environment creates an opportunity for continuous support. The information gathered from this presentation will benefit school psychologists and their ability to provide mental health services and promote the acceptance of a healthy body image in order to improve overall student success.

**References**


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